

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

ACDA-05 AID-05 OMB-01 IO-10 /086 W

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P R 061128Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3822

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE

USMISSION USUN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 25751

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, FR, CN

SUBJECT: COMORO ISLANDS

SUMMARY: QUAI ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA CHAUVET TOLD EMBOFF OCTOBER 3 THAT COMORIAN HEAD OF GOVERNMENT JAFFAR IS EXPECTED IN PARIS OCTOBER 6. THE GOF WILL PRESSURE JAFFAR AND HOPES THAT AT THE END OF HIS ANTICIPATED WEEK'S VISIT, A SOLUTION TO THE COMOROS PROBLEM WILL HAVE BEEN FOUND. SUCH A RESULT IS NOT CERTAIN, HOWEVER. END SUMMARY

1. ACCORDING TO CHAUVET, COMOROS HAS APPLIED FOR ADMISSION TO THE UN AND HAS REQUESTED FRENCH SPONSORSHIP. CURRENTLY, SUCH SPONSORSHIP IS IMPOSSIBLE BECAUSE THE JULY 3, 1975 COMOROS INDEPENDENCE LAW (PREVIOUSLY REFERRED TO AS THE JUNE 30 LAW) OBLIGES THE GOF NOT TO GRANT INDEPENDENCE UNTIL MAYOTTE BY MAJORITY VOTE JOINS THE OTHER ISLANDS IN REQUESTING INDEPENDENCE.

2. THE GOF CONSIDERS THAT A FEDERAL ARRANGEMENT, ALLOWING EACH ISLAND CONSIDERABLE AUTONOMY, IS THE BEST

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SOLUTION. THERE ARE ELEMENTS OF THE MAYOTTE PRO-FRENCH

POPULATION WHICH ARE PREPARED TO ACCEPT A FEDERAL SOLUTION BUT POLITICAL LEADER MARCEL HENRY IS NOT AMONG THEM. HENCE, CHAUVET STATED HIGHLY CONFIDENTIALLY, THE SECRETARIAT FOR OVERSEAS DEPARTMENTS AND TERRITORIES (DOM-TOM) IS "WORKING TO HAVE HIM REPLACED" BY SOMEONE PREPARED TO ACCEPT A FEDERAL ORGANIZATION. THE DOM-TOM ALSO IS TRYING TO PERSUADE THE MAYOTTE POPULATION OF THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING COMORIAN AND NOT FRENCH.

3. NATURALLY, CHAUVET CONTINUED, JAFFAR IS OPPOSED TO A LARGE DEGREE OF DECENTRALIZATION AND IT IS ON THIS POINT THAT THE GOF WILL PRESS HIM THIS WEEK. FRANCE'S TRUMP CARD IS, OF COURSE, FRENCH AID WHICH BOTH JAFFAR AND MAYOTTE REPRESENTATIVES KNOW THEY NEED AND WHICH THE GOF IS PREPARED TO THREATEN TO CUT OFF IF AN EARLY SOLUTION IS NOT AGREED TO.

4. ASSUMING THAT JAFFAR'S ACCORD IS RECEIVED, THE GOF SHORTLY WILL HOLD A POLL IN MAYOTTE AND INTRODUCE A DRAFT BILL IN THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT WHICH WOULD GRANT INDEPENDENCE BEFORE THE END OF THE CURRENT UNGA. CHAUVET THOUGHT THAT PERSUADING SUCH IMPERIAL DIE-HARDS IN PARLIAMENT AS DEBRE AND MESSMER OF THE RIGHTNESS OF A FEDERAL SOLUTION MIGHT BE MORE DIFFICULT THAT CONVINCING THE MAYOTTE POPULATION. HE COMMENTED THAT THE GOF'S EARLIER MISTAKE WAS NOT TO HAVE TAKEN PARLIAMENTARY OPINION SUFFICIENTLY INTO ACCOUNT AND THAT THE DOMESTIC FRENCH POLITICAL PROBLEMS ARE, IN FACT, GREATER THAN THOSE IN THE ARCHIPELAGO ITSELF.

5. QUERIED ABOUT FRENCH THINKING ON A MILITARY BASE, CHAUVET SAID THAT THE GOF RECOGNIZES THAT IT CANNOT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 25751

ESTABLISH ONE IN THE COMOROS "FOR SEVERAL YEARS" SINCE TODAY'S OAU AND OTHER WORLD OPINION MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE POLITICALLY TO DO SO. CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN, HE INTIMATED, TO ASKING AN INDEPENDENT COMORIAN GOVERNMENT FOR BASE RIGHTS AT SOME UNSPECIFIED FUTURE DATE.

6. IF THE ABOVE SCENARIO WORKS OUT, CHAUVET SAID THAT FRANCE WILL SPONSOR COMORIAN ADMISSION TO THE UN IN EARLY DECEMBER. THE QUAI HOPES THAT PRESSURES ON FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS WILL NOT LEAD THEM TO RECOGNIZE THE COMORIAN GOVERNMENT BEFORE THE FRENCH ARE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT THEIR PLAN.

7. COMMENT: WHILE CHAUVET APPEARED OPTIMISTIC THAT THE FRENCH GAME PLAN WILL SUCCEED, THERE ARE SEVERAL PITFALLS. THE DOM-TOM MAY NOT BE ABLE TO MANIPULATE THE MAYOTTE POPULATION AS CONTEMPLATED, JAFFAR MAY RESIST PRESSURES FOR DECENTRALIZATION WITH MORE DETERMINATION THAN EXPECTED, AND DEBRE AND COMPANY ARE LIKELY TO BE EVEN HARDER TO CONVINCE THAN THE QUAI ANTICIPATES.
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MEANWHILE, THE PRESSURE OF THIRD WORLD OPINION WILL IN ANY CASE PROBABLY LEAD THE UN TO CONSIDER COMORIAN MEMBERSHIP THIS FALL. THIS TOO, MIGHT UPSET THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT PLAN WHICH OTHERWISE, GIVEN TIME AND THE ABSENCE OF INTERNATIONAL PRESSURES, APPEARS TO HAVE A REASONABLE CHANCE OF FULFILLMENT.
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